

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions, comprising:

providing a set of modes for interacting with a computing
5 device, at least some of the modes selectable by a user of the
computing device, the modes being associated with settings of
the computing device, the computing device interacting with
the user in a first mode;

detecting a characteristic of an environment of the
10 computing device, the characteristic having changed;

determining at least one of the settings to change in
response to the changed characteristic; and

changing the at least one of the settings to cause the
computing device to interact with the user in a second mode.

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2. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, further
comprising querying the user as to whether the user wants to
interact with the computing device in the second mode.

20 3. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein
changing the setting is automatically done in response to the
characteristic having changed.

4. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the characteristic is a light incident to a display of the computing device.

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5. The computer-readable medium of claim 4, wherein before the setting is changed, the display displays at a first intensity and wherein after the setting is changed, the display displays at a second intensity.

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6. The computer-readable medium of claim 4, wherein the setting causes output to come from an audio device.

7. The computer-readable medium of claim 6, wherein the
15 output is speech.

8. The computer-readable medium of claim 5, further comprising detecting that the characteristic has changed again and in response adjusting the display to display at the first
20 intensity.

9. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the characteristic is an ambient noise surrounding the computing device.

5 10. The computer-readable medium of claim 9, wherein before the setting is changed, a speaker associated with the computing device outputs sound at a first volume and wherein after the setting is changed, the speaker outputs sound at a second volume.

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11. The computer-readable medium of claim 9, wherein a speaker associated with the computing device stops outputting sound when the ambient noise is greater than or equal to a threshold.

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12. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein detecting the characteristic is accomplished via at least one of a photocell, a microphone, a global positioning system (GPS), a gyroscope, a galvanic skin response strip, a camera, 20 a heat sensor, a motion sensor, and a humidity sensor.

13. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein
detecting the characteristic comprises detecting that a device
has been attached to the computing device.

5 14. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein
detecting the characteristic comprises detecting that a device
has been unattached from the computing device.

10 15. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, further
comprising storing a user preference related to at least one
setting in a removable storage medium.

15 16. The computer-readable medium of claim 15, further
comprising attaching the removable storage medium to another
computing device, wherein the other computing device obtains
the user preference from the removable storage medium.

20 17. The computer-readable medium of claim 16, wherein
the other computing device downloads an application in
response to the user preference.

18. The computer-readable medium of claim 17, wherein
the application is a screen reader indicated by the user
preference.

5 19. The computer-readable medium of claim 16, wherein
the other computing device installs a driver in response to
the user preference.

10 20. The computer-readable medium of claim 19, wherein
the other computing device uninstalls the driver after the
user removes the removable storage medium from the other
computing device.

15 21. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, further
comprising storing a user preference related to at least one
setting on a server.

20 22. The computer-readable medium of claim 21, wherein
another computing device accesses the user preference from the
server and interacts with the user in accordance with the user
preference.

23. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the input or output device comprises an application executing on the computing device.

5 24. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions, comprising:

 a plurality of applications, the applications executable by a computing device, each application having one or more settings associated therewith, at least one of the settings indicating a mode for interacting with a user of the application associated with the setting;

 detecting that a characteristic of an environment of the computing device has changed;

15 changing at least one of the settings in response, the at least one of the settings changed affecting a mode in which the computing device interacts with the user.

25. The computer-readable medium of claim 24, wherein changing the at least one of the settings occurs automatically.

26. The computer-readable medium of claim 24, further comprising asking the user whether the user wants the computing device to interact with the user in a different mode.

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27. The computer-readable medium of claim 24, wherein the mode comprises a set of devices with which the computing device communicates with the user.

10 28. The computer-readable medium of claim 24, wherein the mode comprises a characteristic of a font.

15 29. The computer-readable medium of claim 28, wherein the characteristic of the font includes at least one of a size, name, weight, foreground color, and background color.

30. The computer-readable medium of claim 24, wherein the mode comprises a set of features provided to user.

20 31. The computer-readable medium of claim 24, further comprising detecting when an anxiety level of the user has

increased and simplifying the set of features provided to the user in response.

32. The computer-readable medium of claim 31, wherein
5 the anxiety level is detected via a galvanic skin response strip.

33. The computer-readable medium of claim 24, wherein
detecting that a characteristic of the environment has changed
10 comprises detecting that a new user has started interacting
with the computing device.

34. The computer-readable medium of claim 33, wherein
detecting that a new user has started interacting with the
15 computing device comprises detecting that a storage medium has
been attached to the computing device, the storage medium
including preferences associated with the new user.

35. The computer-readable medium of claim 24, further
20 comprising retrieving preferences associated with the user.

36. The computer-readable medium of claim 35, wherein
the preferences relate to at least one of appearance,
preferred input, preferred output, preferred user interface
complexity, preferred multimedia settings, and preferred
5 presentation effects.

37. A system for interacting with a user, comprising:
one or more sensors configured to sense changes in an
environment of the system;
10 one or more input devices configured to enter input into
the system;
one or more output devices configured to output data to
the user; and
an engine configured to receives data from the one or
15 more sensors and determine a mode in which the system
interacts with the user.

38. The system of claim 37, wherein the mode in which
the system interacts with the user depends at least in part on
20 at least one of the changes in the environment of the system.

39. The system of claim 38, wherein a change of the environment includes a change in light.

40. The system of claim 39, wherein the one or more
5 output devices include a display and wherein the engine causes the display to display at a different intensity in response to the change in light.

41. The system of claim 39, wherein the one or more
10 output devices include a speaker and wherein the engine causes output to be directed to the speaker when the change in light passes a threshold.

42. The system of claim 37, wherein the one or more
15 sensors detect that the user has a problem associated with entering data via a keyboard.

43. The system of claim 42, wherein the problem comprises a difficulty in pressing multiple keys at once.

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44. The system of claim 43, wherein in response to detecting that the user has difficulties in pressing multiple

keys at once, the engine queries the user whether the user would like to have sticky keys enabled, sticky keys logically causing a first key to remain depressed until a second key is depressed.